

# Turn and Turn About

by Ellian

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Summary: In this continuing classic story, Catherine recieves unexpected help to escape from Gabriel...help which leads to a revelation(s) for Vincent.

## 1. The Past is Prologue; The Here and Now.

> <meta name="GENERATOR"> Turn and Turn About \*\*Turn and Turn About.\*\*>

><font>Spoilers for "Beauty and the Beast" ep "Though Lovers be Lost" and "Pretenders" ep "Meltdown"<font>

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\_The Past is Prologue - Fall 1989, New York City\_

A woman in her early 50's sat at her desk at 1600 6th Avenue, 14th floor. In the years since she'd left the Center, Catherine Parker had gone from job to job, finally ending up in New York City. She half expected the Center sweepers to come after her, or for Jarod and Hannah to come after her to complete her plan. But no one ever came.

> Gabriel Gennisee's organization reminded her a lot of the Center. His over weaning ego and need for privacy combined with a terribly sadistic streak set the tone. He was working on a new project, something to do with a child. She'd been told to take care of the nursery personally. It had taken 5 tries to get it right - he wanted nothing but the best for the child. <br> Catherine had a feeling, honed by years at the Center and on the run, that Gabriel was not telling her everything involved. Okay, so maybe it wasn't a great leap, but it was what had kept her here when she normally would have fled in a terror of memory.

> Finishing up, she gathered papers into a folder. She strode down the hallway to Gabriel's office. Knocking on the door and gaining no reply, she opened the door. Technically she shouldn't be going into the room uninvited, but Gabriel had said he wanted the file on his desk ASAP. Setting the file on the desk, a passing glance stopped her cold. <br> Sitting on the desk was a pile of black and white photos. Pictures of a lion faced man, apparently in a rage, were intermingled

with those of a woman in various stages of pregnancy - always in the same stark room. My God, she thought, it can't be. Where was this woman? In the building, her mind raced back the answer. Gabriel, so in need of control, would want easy access to her - and to the child she carried.

> She only had to find out where. No child, even what was apparently a genetically engineered one, could be left in Gabriel's hand. She hadn't been able to save Timothy, or Jarod, or Ethan, or even her daughter Hannah from a life in the Center. But maybe she could save this child. <p>

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The power went out, bathing the hallway in darkness. Stepping up her pace, she quickly made her way to the room at the end of the hallway. Glancing quickly around, she inserted a key into the lock and cautiously opened the door.

> "I'm here to help you. Come with me, hurry," Parker whispered urgently, offering a coat and shoes. <br> The woman stared at her in disbelief.

> "You can stay here and give your baby over to Gabriel Genissee, or you can take a chance and come with me." <br> That seemed to galvanize the young woman. She quickly put on the items offered.

> "Lead the way." <br> The two women made their way down the fire escape and into a dark alley. Turn left, Jake Tyler had said, and then a right - into another alley. Move to the fire escape, and wait. Someone will meet you there, and take you to safety. A car whizzed by and a child, barely a teenager, barreled into the alley on a bike. And stopped cold. Cathy, she mouthed in disbelief.

> "Ellian, what are you doing here?" <br> The girl dropped the bike in shock.

> "F-father said they needed someone to show entrance to the tunnels, that knew this part of town. Here," the child said, suddenly remembering herself. She hid the bike behind a smelly dumpster, covering it with a cardboard box. Pulling up a drainage grate, she produced a flashlight from under her jacket. The child dropped down into the hole and many loud beats of the heart later the top of a ladder appeared. "Can you make it down?" a small voice echoed from below. <br> This was unbelievable, Catherine Parker thought as she helped the heavily pregnant woman down the ladder. Their descent complete, the ladder was quickly pulled down and the grate replaced. The child moved to a pipe and quickly tapped what only could be a message, but in a code Parker didn't know.

> The child hugged Cathy Chandler, clearly glad to see her. <br> "Vincent, and Mr. Maxwell, and everyone have been searching for you. I'd almost given up hope, but Vincent never did. Is it Vincent's?" the child nodded toward Cathy's stomach as she led them through the maze of tunnels.

> The woman smiled, and nodded. The two seemed to have forgotten Catherine Parker for the moment. <br> "Well, I'm glad I was finally found. Where is he? I can't quite understand the tapping after all this time."

> "Just behind us. He didn't want to scare her," the child replied, indicating Parker. <br> Parker looked behind them, barely making out a cloaked figure. Her hair stood on end.

\* \* \*

Father waited patiently in his chambers, fingering the chessboard. He was always nervous when someone new came below, but was all the more

so in this instance. The two in need hadn't been seen by the helper who recommended them in almost two decades - a time period which could bring a lot of changes. All he knew about them was the debt the helper had alluded to during the council meeting.

> Closing his eyes, he listened to the pipes. And sat bolt upright at the sentry's relay of a message. Could it be that, after all this time, Catherine was back and escorted by this newcomer? He paced the room, wanting to be able to hurry the small party's way to his chamber but knowing he couldn't. <br> After a few agonizing minutes, the three stood at the entrance to his chamber. Father couldn't help staring. There stood the Helper's child Ellian, an elderly woman about his age, and a very pregnant Catherine Chandler. Recovering quickly, he invited them in.

> "I take it things went as planned." <br> The child nodded.

> "Now comes the difficult part." <p>

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Joe Maxwell looked stared at the ceiling, and took another sip of beer. Grimacing, he swallowed. If someone had told him 3 years ago (hell, even 6 months ago) that he'd be on suspension with no end in site, he'd have laughed in their face. But he wasn't laughing now. He threw the empty beer can at the wall.

> And got an answering knock in response. At first, he thought it was the beer, but the knock continued insisently. <br> "Who is it?" he yelled.

> "Joe let me in," the impatient voice was familiar somehow. <br> He got up and looked through the peephole. Gee, now I'm hallucinating, he thought, but opened the door on the chance that he wasn't. There stood Catherine Chandler, an older woman with graying hair, and a burly redheaded man with a beard. Cathy turned and whispered something to the man and he left hesitantly.

> "Hi, Joe," she greeted him like it hadn't been six months since she'd last seen him. "I heard you were suspended on my account, and came to say I was sorry." <br> Joe just stood there, gaping, before he recovered himself just apologize for the mess and offer her a drink. She declined, but handed him her coat. It was then that he got a good look at her. Somehow the oversized coat had hidden a baby cuddled in a snugly against her chest.

> "Cathy, what? Where? Huh?" <br> "I see that rapier wit of yours is still intact. Here, sit down and I'll start from the beginning."

> Joe listened as Catherine Chandler, ex-New York debutante turned crusading district attorney, related slowly the events of the past half year. Everything - Moreno, the kidnapping, her pregnancy, the imprisonment and her escape (sans details about the tunnels) - was related in painful detail and horrified vagueness. He sat stunned through out it all, then looked incredulously from one woman to the other. <br> "You're both willing to testify?"

> "We wouldn't be here otherwise, Joe." <p>

\* \* \*

Cathy had once heard someone say that the wheels of justice turned slowly but that injustice was fueled by the wind. She couldn't help but agree. She and Maybell Collins had been placed in the witness protection program and now waited, patiently, in an ultra high security level of a high security federal building. They got daily updates from Joe Maxwell, but Cathy sometimes got overwhelmed by the feeling that she was back in Gabriel's tower. It was at these times, and when she fed Jacob, that she wanted to go running back to the

tunnels and to Vincent's waiting arm.

> And it was then that Maybell held her and rocked her and sung her some nameless lullaby. Maybell had been closed off about her past before working in Gabriel's organization, but had alluded to children and a husband somewhere. Cathy could see the woman sometimes yearned for contact with them and it took all her strength not to ask. The only time answer she'd ever given was that they thought she was dead and that it was safer that way. <br> "Earth to Radcliffe. Come in."

> "Sorry, Joe. What were you saying?" <br> "I can see we won't get any more work done today," he threw down the pen. He softened his voice. "I've been told I have a real good ear."

> She shook her head and sighed. "I'm just wondering if life will ever seem normal again. There have been more changes in the past 3 years than the whole rest of my life. I can't see where I'm going any more." <br> Joe leaned forward and touched her arm.

> "Your job's there if you want it, when the trials over. That is, if you keep insisting on not going into the witness protection program."

<br> She shook her head to the latter. She didn't want to be relocated to away from the tunnels and didn't want to be a hiding from Gabriel Gennisse. It would feel too much like running away. She'd considered moving to the tunnels, the way Maybell had decided to do, but couldn't imagine living so close to Vincent when he still held her at arms length.

> "Thanks for the job offer, Joe. I might just take you up on that." She smiled, wanly. <br> He smiled back, concerned.

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"Ex-DA Moreno Takes Deal."

> Joe sighed at the headline. The "DA Kidnapping Case", dubbed so by the media, had lead the 5:00 news for the past few weeks. The fall out of corruption in the higher echelons of the city had been enormous. Now acting District Attorney, he'd been right in the middle of it trying to keep some degree of sanity amid press conferences, Johnny Carson monologues, and a total reshuffling of the District Attorney's office. He would've killed to have the steady presence of Catherine Chandler, but understood that having an important witness running around as target practice wasn't a very bright idea. <br> They'd finally gotten a court date for Gabriel Gennisse. Hopefully, all would go well.

> "Mysterious Witness Testifies in DA Kidnapping Trial." <br> The trial was going almost too smoothly and Cathy kept expecting the other shoe to drop. She was set to testify tomorrow and felt a mixture of relief and dread. She looked down at her son, sleeping peacefully his bassinet, and stroked his soft cheek. For you, she thought, so you won't look over your shoulder. So you'll be safe.

> "Gabriel Gennisse Declares Fatherhood of DA's Baby." <br> It had been surreal. Gennisse, previously paying little attention to the court proceedings, had lunged at Catherine Chandler as she testified. He'd called her a bitch and a whore. He had yelled that no matter what she did, Jacob Charles Chandler would always be his son. Blood typing had indicated that he couldn't possibly have fathered Cathy's son, but that hadn't deterred the rumor mill.

> "Jury says Gennisse Guilty." <br> It was a relief that it was over. It was a relief that not only did she have a job, she'd been promoted. To Deputy District Attorney, no less. So why did she half to busy herself so much that she couldn't think straight? Why had she moved when the memories of Vincent on her balcony apartment got too

much?

> The answer was simple. He never came to see her; she had to initiate all of their contact. What little contact they had was gained mostly when she picked up and dropped off Jacob to stay Below for the day. And even that little was strained. Mary had told her Vincent blamed himself for what had happened. Father had told her to give Vincent time. Mouse told her Vincent moped about and sulked. Vincent barely said two words to her and never touched her. <br> She was reaching her breaking point.

\* \* \*

Vincent mulled in his chamber. Catherine had already taken Jacob Above, to her brownstone with the new easy access Mouse and Cullen had worked out. He didn't even have to risk the streets Above to see her now.

> Yet, he kept his distance. <br> He couldn't quite believe in himself, in them.

> He couldn't quite believe that she would choose him over what lay "out there." Above, in the sunlight, offered her so much possibility. <br> "Mulling over something you can change just makes the rift deeper."

> Vincent looked up to see Maybell. <br> "I can't change it."

> "You mean you won't," the steely voice answered. <br> "These hands have..."

> "Done no better or worse than any other mans, Vincent. Trust me when I say I've seen how cruel man can be." <br> "I brought this on Catherine. If it weren't for me, she'd still have a chance at a life Above. She wouldn't be tied to..."

> "To what, Vincent? A monster? Shall I tell you what other men have done that make you look the saint?" Maybell's voice rang with untold grief, bottled up with survival and denial for 20 years. "Little children, broken and used, taken forcibly from their parents and locked away? Did I tell you my own husband, raised Above and the perfect man on paper, had me impregnated by another man because he was more concerned with my gifts than with keeping my trust?" Maybell was yelling hysterically now, tears streaming down her face. All Vincent could do was sit in shock. <br> "Shall I tell you how I faked my own death to be rid of him, only to put myself in the hands of someone worse?" Maybell's hands shook violently. "I had to leave my daughter in his hands. I had to leave 2 little boys in the hands of monsters. I had to hear my daughter screaming over my body while I played dead. Monsters make it into the world Above, Vincent. You can't guarantee her a happy life by pushing her away. The proverb doesn't say to push away your loved ones when they return. It only says to let them make the choice. She loves you, Vincent. Four months in that hell hole they called a witness protection program and all she talked about was wanting to be with you." Her voice had stopped trembling, and was now filled with an iron conviction. "She loves and respects you enough to wait until you're ready. Out of all the men she's met, she's choosen you. Jacob is living proof that the world won't come to an end if you're intimate with her. Tell me, Vincent, why don't you love and respect her enough to let her make that decision?" Maybell's jaw was clenched firmly; a stray tear rolled down her cheek.

> Vincent stood in shock. In the months he'd known her, Maybell Collins had never raised her voice to anyone, let alone with the anger and vehemence she now displayed. <br> "I do love her, more that life itself," he bellowed. "I'm so scared, so frightened of what might happen. Lisa..."

> "Lisa and you were children, still discovering yourselves. The first boy I kissed actually gave me a bloody lip. I doubt he swore off women. Yes, you are physically different, but it is a matter of degree not kind," her soft voice reassured. "She is willing to be with you even after you forgot your precious restraint and allowed this terrible thing to happen. Shouldn't you at least go to her and ask her why? Don't you owe it to her to explain why you're cutting yourself off from her?" <br> Vincent breathed heavily, in and out. Lip raised to bare his fangs, he looked into the woman's eyes. He shook his head in confusion. Was she right?  
> She cupped his cheek in her hand. "Degree, not kind. You are one of the best men I have ever known," she smiled at him, kissed his forehead and left. <p>

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Catherine felt a hand brush against her hair and startled awake.  
> "Do you always fall asleep in this rocker, nursing our child?" <br> "Vincent!" She rose from the chair and hugged him to her. "You came."  
> "We need to talk, Catherine, about a great many things." <br> "Yes, we do."  
> <br>  
> <p>

\_The Here is Now - Fall 2000, New York City\_

Jarod stared at the microfiche screen. He'd tracked Catherine Parker this far, where she'd helped bring down a crime lord named Gabriel Genissee. His trial had brought sensational headlines and newspaper sales - both for the romanticized version of events and for the fact that an assistant district attorney had been held by him for 6 months. But now, the trail dead ended. Catherine Parker, known to Genissee and New York City as Maybell Collins, had disappeared off the face of the earth.  
> That could only mean one of two things. One, that someone at the Center actually read the newspaper. Or two, that she'd gone deep underground to avoid the eventual arrival of Center officials. He hoped for the latter. And he quickly dialed a number against the latter. <br> "Parker," the familiar voice answered.  
> "It's about your mother. I've traced her to New York City in 1989, but can't get any farther." <br> "My mother was alive in 1989, Jarod? What else do you know?"  
> "Well, the picture in this newspaper story looks remarkably like her. I suggest you check in Centre files for where she may have gone next." <br> He returned the receiver to its cradle. He pressed a button on his laptop and faxed her the story.

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Jarod watched as Catherine Chandler leaned over to wipe ketchup from the face of her daughter. The child said something and laughed, getting a similar reaction from her older brother. He watched as Catherine rolled her eyes and smiled at Joe Maxwell. Would his life have been something like this, without the interference of the Centre?  
> Jarod shook himself. He had to concentrate. If the Center hadn't gotten to Catherine Parker, then Chandler was the best chance to pick up the trail. There was no doubt that Miss Parker would make the same assumption. There was something more going on here, though, absent of

Centre intrigue. He looked down at the open file folder on the table. "Certificate of Live Birth," one sheet read, belonging to one Jacob Charles Chandler. All of his mother's information was filled out, but it proclaimed "father unknown." Caroline Victoria Chandler's claimed the same thing, although Jarod saw enough resemblance in the children to be almost certain they had the same father. Who, or what, was their mother protecting? <br> He'd never find out sitting across a noisy McDonald's from them. Gathering up his papers and food, he crossed the restaurant.

> "Mind if I join you at the trough?" he asked. <br> "Pigs eat at troughs, people don't, silly," a dutiful child informed him as her mother motioned for Jarod to join them.

> "You know, I think you're absolutely right. Where was my mind?" <br> "Um," the child pondered. "Mars?"

> Jarod laughed. <br> "So, Caroline," he whispered to the child, "do you think you can get your mother to give me less homework?"

\* \* \*

Miss Parker hung up the phone. It was just like Jarod to give her some tantalizing bit of information and be sketchy about the details. Distractedly looking at the fax machine as it spit out some urgent piece of business, she nearly missed Broot's entrance.

> "What's this?" he asked, picking up the fax. "Hey, this is Jarod's handwriting!" <br> Parker snatched it out of his hand. It was a bad copy of an 11 year old New York Times clipping made worse by electronic transmission. A picture of an older woman sitting in a witness stand was surrounded by a story entitled "Mysterious Witness Testifies in DA Kidnapping Trial." Jarod had circled the picture and written "Look familiar?" in the margin.

> "Get me everything you've got on this - trial transcripts, full background on everyone involved, anything you can get your hands on. Meet me in an hour at the landing strip." <br> Broots nodded and left.

> Miss Parker had always loathed the waiting involved in flying and this time was no exception. Broot's voice brought her back to reality. <br> "Catherine Chandler disappeared just after her boss gave her some book detailing corruption in the DA's office. There was an investigation, but it didn't lead anywhere. Joe Maxwell was even suspended for continuing the investigation."

> "Someone didn't want her found." <br> "Exactly. Well, 6 months after she disappeared, Chandler shows up - with a newborn baby. She never did say who the father was, although the rumor was it belonged to the guy that kidnapped her."

> "Broots, it takes 9 months to make a baby," she informed him icily. <br> "Yeah, I know. But the rumor was that's why he kept her alive instead of killing her. I mean, normally a guy like this would have just killed her to send a message, pregnant or not."

> "Broots, just go on." <br> "Well, apparently the woman in the clipping Jarod sent us was a kind of secretary to Genissee. Her testimony, combined with Chandler's and Moreno's was pretty condemning. Genissee got two life sentences without possibility of parole. Moreno, who was District Attorney at the time and as corrupt as they get, took a deal and served 8 years. He's still on probation. I've already got an expediter interviewing them, and another one keeping tabs on Chandler and Maxwell."

> "Good." <p>

\* \* \*

Jarod quickly glanced outside, and his brow furrowed. Across the street, a nondescript dark car had pulled into a conveniently empty space. If he'd been closer, he was sure he'd see Delaware plates. Quickly excusing himself from the fun, he left the restaurant via the back door. He'd have to be more subtle if he wanted to stay in New York. And he did - if only for the slight chance that Catherine Parker knew where his mother was.

> Slowly he made his way through the alley and onto Fifth Avenue. Casually making his way down the block, he suddenly felt a gun at his back. <br> "Don't move. I'm going to get a big promotion for capturing you when even the great Miss Parker couldn't."

> "Fat chance," Jarod elbowed the man before breaking into a run. He swerved into an alley, climbing swiftly over a chain link fence. He heard a gun shot ricochet off the wall and looked quickly around for cover. A drainage grate caught his eye and he quickly yanked it up. Dropping down, he covered the grate and randomly picked a direction. <br> He must have gone no more than 100 meters when he ran into a scruffy looking man. His disheveled blond hair and patched clothing pegged him as one of the cities homeless, if one of the cleaner ones.

> "Not supposed to be here. No one supposed to be here. Too close. Must go," the man pleaded. <br> "Then show me the nearest way out."

> "Back the way you came," the man started. <br> "No, I can't go back there. I'm being chased. Please, is there another way?"

> The man looked at him. <br> "Bad men? Can't have bad men in the tunnels - not safe. Must tell Vincent. Or Father. Hurry, this way."

> Jarod became aware of a steady tapping as he followed the shorter man through the tunnels. They stopped at a bend, no different than the others had passed, with no obvious exit out of the tunnels. <br> "Do not turn around," a silky voice commanded him from behind. "Who are you?"

> "My name is Jarod Crichton." <br> "The new assistant district attorney. What brings you below the city?"

> Jarod wondered how he knew that. <br> "Was chased, Vincent," the blond man offered.

> Jarod heard an indrawn breath as the tapping pipes increased in urgency. <br> "You've brought an armed man into the tunnels. Who is he?" the figure behind him asked.

> "The organization he works for took me from my parents when I was a child. I escaped but they want me back," Jarod surprised himself by telling the truth. <br> "Mouse, take him to Father. Then, have someone send for Catherine."

> Jarod heard retreating footsteps. When he turned, he saw a cloaked figure running the way he and Mouse had just come. <br> "Follow Mouse," the man gestured and Jarod did.

\* \* \*

Catherine entered Father's chamber. She looked up to the raised half-level and saw Vincent standing there in the shadows. Smiling a greeting at him, she moved toward the table where Jarod and Father sat.

> "If you were in trouble, you should have come to me." <br> Jarod whipped around, startled.

> "Cathy? You're the Catherine they sent for?" <br> She nodded and sat down.

> "Maybe you should explain things a bit. Everything you tell us doesn't have to leave this room." <br> Jarod sat back down at moved



his gaze between Cathy and the man called Father. Both sat patiently, awaiting his words. He looked up at raised half-level. He knew someone was there - everyone coming or going from this room had seruptiously looked up there. He wondered if it was this mysterious man he'd met in the tunnel earlier. He looked back at the other two at the table. Jarod related a truncated version of his childhood in the tower and the events that had led him to New York, leaving out the nastier sidelines and twists. The two, to their credit, held back their questions until he'd finished relating the story. The questions, when they came, were intelligent and well thought out. Soon, the woman named Mary came and led him to a guest chamber where he could "rest".

> Vincent came down the spiral staircase and joined them at the table. <br> "Work on sealing the entrances in the area Jarod entered is well underway. Perhaps you should stay below while this is going on. This could be dangerous."

> "We need someone Above now as eyes and ears, Vincent. I'm in the best position as deputy DA to get the information we need. I agree, you and the children should stay below, though." <br> Vincent felt the protest on her lips, wishing they could call on Joe Maxwell to help out more fully. But he knew she was right - Catherine was the best placed person to act as an intermediary between her two worlds.

> "Father?" <br> The three looked up at Maybell Collins, standing at the threshold to Father's chamber.

> "I ran into Mouse, and I think I can help." <p>

\* \* \*

"What do you mean, you can't find the expediter that was following Chandler? What, did he fall into a black hole? He couldn't have just disappeared!"

> "I know, Miss Parker. He wouldn't answer his phone or his pager. When we had the satellite track them, we found them in a dumpster in the Bronx." <br> "What was he in the Bronx for? Have you found Chandler yet?"

> "No to both. It seems they've both disappeared. The last time anyone saw Chandler was 6:30 last night, at a McDonald's. I'm not sure how honest Maxwell was being - he seemed protective of Chandler." <br> "Willie," Parker turned, "stake out her brownstone. I want to know the minute she gets home. Get Ellian to follow Maxwell. Chandler's got to be somewhere."

\* \* \*

"Cathy, where have you been?" Joe stormed into her office, slamming the door behind him. "I tried to get a hold of you all night. There were some pretty scary people looking for you last night. They said you were in danger - something about Genissee's men finally coming after you."

> So that was the story, Catherine thought. <br> "I know, Joe. That's why I wasn't answering the phone last night," she related the cover story worked out the previous night. "An old contact tipped me off. I wanted to get the kids to safely to a friend's house."

> "Cathy, if these guys have you this scared, maybe you should go into the witness protection..." <br> "Joe," she cut him off. "These people may not be who they appear to be. Or even if they are, there might be a leak. Genissee's people have paid others off before, or haven't you forgotten?"

> Joe looked as if she'd slapped him in the face. <br> "You don't

think I..."

> "No, Joe, no. I'm just not willing to trust their safety to a program that might be compromised." <br> A knock at the door interrupted them, and Escobar stook her head in.

> "There are some people here to see you, Cathy. They say it's important." <br> "Show them in."

> A tall, all-business brunette and a balding man brushed past Escobar. <br> "Ms. Chandler? I'm Miss Parker. I'd like to talk to you alone for a moment." It wasn't a request.

> "You're guy stays, my guys stays," Cathy countered. <p>

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Ellian sipped the lukewarm coffee. Looking across the street toward the Criminal Justice building, she could still feel the sense of surreal deja vu that had gripped her when she'd gotten the orders to come to New York after Jarod. She wondered how the events of 11 years ago, and the part of her life she'd kept hidden for so long, had to do with Jarod. The sense of anger and confusion held by a 13 year old kid all those years ago had surfaced yet again when she'd interviewed Moreno and Genissee.

> She had to find a way to get Below - or at least to Cathy - to warn them about the danger the Centre posed. It was too great a possibility that Miss Parker could find out about the tunnels. She was already past the line, though. She'd covered up Carl's body, recognizing all too well who's handiwork the claw marks had been. He'd be buried in Potter's field today. <br> Looking at her watch, she decided she had just enough time. Cathy would keep Parker and Broots as long as possible to get all the information she could. Hopefully, they wouldn't miss her. Leaving payment on the table, she left the coffee shop and hurried down the block, setting a hurried pace only learned in New York. Entering a small deli, she smiled at the owner. She sighed in relief to see it still operated by a helper.

> "Ellian, I haven't seen you in how long? Five years? You must visit Below - Father and the others will be happy that one of our own has returned. Are you back for good?" <br> "No, John, I'm just in town on business and thought I'd stop by to say hello. And get some of that great sausage of yours."

> "Of course, of course," the man started to pack up the smoked sausage that had been a special treat growing up. "I'll get you a few pounds, on the house. You look like a few more pounds wouldn't hurt. On the house." He handed the package over the butchers counter. <br> "No, John, let me pay," Ellian reached into her blazer and took out a five. Handing it over the counter, she looked at him with an unmistakable meaning in her eye.

> "Oh, okay," he gave up more easily than he would have under normal circumstances. "Winterfest is this week, if you can come." <br> "I'd like that. I'll probably be down here tomorrow and you can give me all the details."

\* \* \*

> DANGER. Miss Parker and Broots connected with very dangerous agency called the Centre, after a man named "Jarod". May ferret out your secret to regain their own. Will run interference, but felt you needed warning. Will come Below if and when I'm able to explain further.

> "This was given to you by Ellian Tyler? And she didn't tell you

where she was staying, or for how long?" <br> "No, only that she'd be back tomorrow. I was going to spend tomorrow Below to help prepare for Winterfest, but..."

> "You might want to stay Above. For whatever reason, she hasn't contacted any of the helpers she was close to. There might be a reason we're not aware of that's keeping her from contacting them."

<br> Father nodded and looked at the note, trying to ferret out some other clue from the short note.

> "Take a Winterfest candle and tell her it's tomorrow night. Hopefully she can get away." <br> John nodded and returned Above.

\* \* \*

"Damn it, Tyler. You're one of our best agents, you used to live here, and you're telling me you can't find out any more? I could finally find my mother, and you're holding out on me!"

> Ellian saw on her face that Parker hadn't meant to reveal that last. It could be a deadly admission in the right hands and Ellian could use it to get Parker in front of the Triumvirate. Her mother? Was that the reason Parker hadn't brought Jarod in - she thought he'd lead her to her mother? It suddenly occurred to the expediter that Jarod may have never been in New York City - and that she suddenly had an advantage. She just had to play it right. <br> "I wasn't going to say anything in case it didn't work out, but I managed to get a meeting with an old buddy of mine. He's well connected, but skittish. He'll run if anyone but me shows up." If you follow I'll report you. Give me room. Ellian didn't have to say it. Parker understood.

> Ellian caught a cab to Catherine Chandler's old apartment. Making sure she wasn't followed, she entered the basement and closed the panel. Her feet carried her down the long familiar path to the home tunnels. She heard the sentry tap out her approach to Father, and was soon at his chamber. Cathy, Vincent, Father, a man that could be Jarod, and a woman she thought was Maybell Collins were already there. <br> "You know my daughter? Did she send you?"

> Ellian stopped in her tracks. "Your daughter?" <br> "Hannah. Parker. Is she ok? Did she get my plan?" Maybell stopped when she realized the expediter was totally confused. "You don't have any idea what I'm talking about, do you?"

> "Miss Parker only knows that I've gone to "meet an informant". Her first name is Hannah, huh? Guess I lost that pool. The story is that we're here looking for Jarod." <br> The meeting went into the night, it's subject an antithesis to the happenings in the Great Hall. Its conclusion satisfied no one fully, but at least it could be lived with.

\* \* \*

In the hours since Tyler had gone to her meeting, Miss Parker had made several phone calls. Some were to wrack up insurance against an ambitious underling; some were to make sure she wouldn't face a tribunal when she got back to the Centre. And now, she concentrated on going over and over the information gathered, as if by just staring at it she'd make Jarod, her mother, and all the dirty secrets pop out.

> A knock at the hotel door startled her. <br> "Who is it?"

> "Tyler." <br> Parker jumped up and opened the door.

> "You won't believe who I found," Tyler said, walking past Parker and into the room. An elderly woman followed her. Parker moved to protest, but the woman spoke first." <br> "You won't believe how small this world has become, Hannah. Maybe we can work on that plan

now, daughter."

## 2. The Abduction; A Glimpse of Origin

> <meta name="GENERATOR"> Turn and Turn About, Part 2 \*\*Turn and Turn About, Part 2.\*\*

><font>Note: "Profiler" & "Pretender" characters belong to NBC et al. and "Beauty and the Beast" characters belong to Republic Pictures.<font>

Spoilers/Timeline: This story takes place after the 4th seasons of "Pretender" and "Profiler" and "Beauty and the Beast" ep "Though Lovers be Lost" (although I've made major changes to the ending).

> <p>

\* \* \*

> <br>\_The Abduction - Fall, 2000. New York City.\_

Samantha Waters, ex-FBI profiler, looked around the apartment. Tastefully done in pastels

> "I love it, Mom. This would be great!" <br> Sam looked at the real estate agent and demurred.

> "Try not to pay any attention to the antics of my daughter. We don't like the apartment at all." <br> "I'll just go in the kitchen so you two can discuss it," the agent excused himself.

> Chloe's eyes pleaded from her place on the balcony. <br> "It must be wonderful view of all the light at night," Sam conceded. The apartment was a little out of her price range, but they'd only be staying there a month while she shot a photo layout for the New Yorker. "You won't mind sleeping with me in the one bedroom?"

> The child shook her head no. <br> "Well, okay then. We'll take it," she called out to the real estate agent, moving towards the kitchen. "Where do I sign my life away?"

\* \* \*

Ellian looked at the orders and raised a curious eyebrow.

> "This comes from the top, Tyler. It can't be countermanded," Parker said icily. "You'll stay in New York to help Willie acquire her. Now, if you'll excuse me, I have to go chase Jarod." <br> Ellian watched as Miss Parker left, Broots following along sheepishly. Gods, she thought, hasn't this kid been through enough? A witness to her father's death, she'd spent the last few years surrounded by cameras and armed men for her protection. Now she was facing cameras and armed men with an all together different and sinister purpose. She couldn't consign another child to Jarod's fate.

> Closing up the file, she stopped mid action. The address they were staying at in New York was Catherine Chandler's old apartment. If she remembered right, Cathy still owned it and the entrance in the basement was still there. Maybe there was a possibility after all, Ellian Tyler smiled. <p>

\* \* \*

Chloe Waters leaned on the railing, waiting for her mother to finish in the rest room. It felt good to be in such a public place with no FBI agents tagging along for protection. Her mother had been right -

looking down on the city from the top of the Empire State Building was breathtaking.

> An arm grabbed her from behind, and she leaned against it. "Ready, Mom?" she turned. Instead of her mother, slim brunette woman in a dark suit stood there. She lifted her jacket to reveal a gun and a badge Chloe didn't recognize. <br> "Hurry, we must go. You're in danger."

> "What about my mother?" the girl asked as a commotion erupted near the bathroom. <br> "She knows where we're going. Come with me."

> Chloe stared at the woman, not sure if she should trust her. <br> "Quickly," the woman commanded and took her hand. They walked toward the elevators and squeezed inside among tourists. As the doors closed, Chloe could hear her mother shout her name. The brunette woman still holding her hand didn't seem to notice.

> They got out of the elevator at the ground floor, left the building, and turned left. At some point, they reached a subway station. Descending the stairs, they boarded the first train that came by. Chloe, out of breath from the hurried walk, looked over toward the woman. She hadn't said two words to her since the initial conversation. <br> "What's your name?"

> "It's better if you didn't know that." <br> Chloe's breathing increased, but not from exertion.

> "Where are you taking me?" <br> "Someplace safe."

> Chloe's hands started to shake. <br> "From who?"

> "Some very bad people." <br> The roll of an eye showed fear, and Chloe's breathing increased yet again. The woman squeezed her hand gently and smiled.

> "You'll see your mother tomorrow, I promise, Chloe. But now, I need you - and your mother needs you - to be strong and do as I say. Do you understand?" she spoke softly. <br> Chloe nodded.

> They got off the train. Instead of going up to street level, the woman looked around carefully before leading them both into a storage room. From there, they entered a hidden door and met a woman in shabby, well worn clothing. She was in her early sixties and held a dummy about Chloe's size. The brunette crouched down and spoke softly. <br> "Chloe, I want you to go with Maybell here. You're going to stay with him until your mother can pick you up tomorrow, okay?"

> "Why can't I see her now?" <br> "It isn't safe, baby. I need you to go with Maybell. Give me your hairband."

> Chloe looked back and forth between the two adults. She slowly removed the item from her hair and gave it to the woman. Did the Maybell have a gun as well? She didn't want to take the chance. <br> "The call?" the woman asked.

> "Of course." The brunette produced a cell phone from her jacket, briefly revealing her gun. She dialed a number and held it to her ear. A few heartbeats later, she mouthed "say hello" and held the phone to Chloe's ear. <br> "Hello?"

> "Chloe! Where are-" her mother's voice answered. <br> The woman took the phone from Chloe's ear and spoke into it.

> "Belvedere's Castle, 6:30 tonight." <br> She hung up.

> "Shouldn't you have at least asked for no FBI? Or told her how much cash?" Chloe erupted. <br> "Baby, we're not kidnapping you," the woman dripped frustration. "Okay, technically, we are," she grabbed Chloe at the shoulders and looked into her eyes, "but only to save you from the Centre. If they get you, you'll never see your mother again." Grabbing the dummy from Maybell, she murmured something about people missing her soon and left the way they'd just come.

> Chloe looked up at the woman, unsure of what to do next. Despite the not wanting to, she liked the older woman. Her voice was soothing

when she spoke again. <br> "Ellian was right, the Centre is a very bad place. You don't want to go there, trust me," she held out her hand.

> Chloe followed Maybell through a maze of tunnels. Several times she thought about escaping, but knew she'd just get lost. An incessant tapping on the pipes grew louder as they went on and several times she thought she saw someone in the shadows. <br> The tunnels were better lit now, and off shoots were more frequent. They turned into one and Chloe was surprised by the profusion of books. Maybell led her to a table, cluttered with books, maps and trinkets. There sat a man about the same age as Maybell. His tone was soft and comforting when he spoke.

> "Well, Chloe, I understand that you'll be staying here for a bit. Everyone here calls me Father. I wanted to talk with you while we wait." <br> "You're not my father! Who are you people? What is the Centre? Why did you take me from my mother?" Chloe yelled hysterically. "I want to go home!"

> "Chloe, here sit down," Maybell guided her to a chair. "Ellian, the woman that took you found out that some very bad people from a place called the Center wanted to take you from your mother..." <p>

\* \* \*

Samantha Waters looked desperately at Bailey Malone.

> "I can't lose her, I can't," she pleaded on the edge of hysteria. "Why'd I even take the job? Why did I-" <br> Bailey took Sam's jaw in his hand.

> "We've got FBI agents swarming the area.. We will catch this woman, Sam. We will get Chloe back." <br> "Oh gods. What if this is some final revenge of Jack's? What if this woman was just waiting for the right moment?"

> Bailey put his arm around her and kissed the top of her head. She rested her head on his shoulder. <br> "Then we'll track her down. We'll make her pay," Bailey could barely keep the anger out of his voice. After all this time, after finally getting out from Jack's shadow, he couldn't believe something like this was happening again. He wanted beat at a world that would put her through so much pain.

> He looked at his watch. 6:25 p.m. Five minutes to go. <p>

\* \* \*

Ellian watched the van with the dummy drive off for some unnamed holding area. She looked at her watch. She only had an hour before she met with Samantha Waters. It was barely enough time to get to Central Park. She hailed a cab and gave her destination. She sat perfectly still as the driver navigated traffic, ignoring all his attempts at conversation. He eventually pulled up near Belvadere's Castle. She paid him and got out, scanning the area.

> Feeling a bit like Lancelot running the gauntlet, she weaved her way through Belvadere's Castle. Recognizing both from their FBI photos, she spotted Samantha Waters standing with Bailey Malone and took a deep breath before removing Chloe's hairband from her pocket. Holding it so both could see, she walked past them towards the tunnel entrance, indicating for them to follow her. <br> They did so, a few feet behind. A tourist moved closer and took another picture. A runner made his second circuit.

> Tyler, followed by Waters and Malone, entered one of the towers. She opened the unlocked door of a maintenance room and waited inside. It took only moments for them to follow her and she quickly shut the

door behind them, setting the latch known only to tunnel dwellers and helpers. <br> "Locking us in a storage closet won't help you escape," Malone said calmly. His eyes alluded to a different emotional state.

> "No, but it will take us to Chloe," Ellian responded in kind as a row of shelves pivoted on a hinge. She gestured for them to proceed her. Waters moved toward the reveled opening, but Malone stopped her. "We're running out of time. This is your choice. Go, or come with me. You can leave now, but it'll be much harder to get Chloe back to you." <br> The two entered the tunnel. Ellian Tyler carefully closed the concealed entrance behind them. She lead them down the tunnels.

> "I'm sorry to worry you, but this was the best way I could think of to guard your daughter from some very nasty people. Given time, I could have come up with some way to involve you before this, but the Centre was breathing down on us." <br> "Who or what is the Centre? And why did you feel the need to kidnap my daughter?"

> "I'm not the one that felt the need, Dr. Waters. The Centre felt the need. If they'd have assigned someone else to do this, you might not have seen her again in your lifetime. The Centre usually gets what it wants - and it doesn't care about the means." <br> "What is your relationship to the Centre?"

> "I got a job there about a year after I graduated high school. The pay and benefits were to good to pass up, and they did make the job sound exciting. Gods, if I knew then..." <br> Tyler slowly explained about the Centre and why they wanted Chloe. Hoping she'd have some of her mothers talents for profiling and that she'd be more malleable, Chloe had been a prime "acquisition." She gave a brief history of the tunnel community. Ellian couldn't give them some details and refused to disclose others - a fact that left all three frustrated as they made their way through the tunnels.

> "What now?" <br> "Three possibilities. One, you can stay here, Below. Two, you can leave New York and go home. Three, you can 'disappear' under new names provided by myself or the FBI," the rouge junior expediter answered.

\* \* \*

Chloe listened numbly as "Father" looked read. She sat apart from the other children and wished desperately for her mother. The voice stopped and she looked up to see what had happened.

> "Okay, children, time for bed." <br> There was a chorus of protests as they were hustled out. Before she could go with them, "Father" stopped her.

> "Your mother's on her way. You should-" <br> "Chloe?" her mothers voice came from down the tunnel. It seemed an instant before they were in each others arms. Samantha Waters brushed back her daughters hair. She wanted so much to give her daughter a normal life. "Will you leave us alone for a moment?" she asked the others.

> "Chloe, we have an important decision to make," she said. <br> An hour later, they came out. Sam and Chloe Waters were staying, at least for now.

A Glimpse of Origin - Fall 2000, The Centre, Delaware.

"Considering you're recently fumbling of the Waters acquisition, I'm not sure you're the one for this new assignment, Miss Tyler. If everyone had the efficiency of yourself or Miss Parker, nothing would get done here," the older man reprimanded as if he were talking about

some corporate merger instead of kidnapping.  
><font> "I'm sure if you give me the chance, I can prove myself. Discounting the Waters acquisition, I have an excellent track record." She felt as if she were reading from some script.<font>

><font> Mr. Raines held up a small silver disc.<font>  
><font> "I want you to track down an old project of mine. All the information you need is here. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to ask."<font>  
><font> Tyler nodded, taking the disk. "I'll get right on it, sir."<font>  
><font> She sat on the small commuter plane, trying to get her thoughts in order. How did you tell someone you cared about that he was the fevered brainchild of a psychopath?<font>

\* \* \*

Miss Parker paced the room as Broots sat engrossed at his keyboard.

><font> "You know, this won't take any quicker with you wearing a hole in the floor. Broots will find this Sekhmet\* project of Raines when he finds it," Sydney entered the room.<font>  
><font> "My mother thinks Sekhmet is the key to a lot of early center projects. It's also the key to her plan to hold the Centre accountable, Sydney. It's important."<font>  
><font> Sydney merely shrugged. Arguing with her would probably get him nowhere.<font>  
> <p>

\*Sekhmet: A lioness goddess, worshiped in Memphis as the wife of Ptah; created by Ra from the fire of  
><font><font>his eyes as a creature of vengeance to punish mankind for his sins; later, was transformed into a peaceful goddess of pleasure and happiness, Bast. <em>from Shawn's Egyptology Page, [http://www.contrib.andrew.cmu.edu/~shawn/egypt/gods.html#sekhmet\\_](http://www.contrib.andrew.cmu.edu/~shawn/egypt/gods.html#sekhmet_)

### 3. Xeroxed

"You'll never find any thing, Parker."

"Really? And what makes you so sure of that?"

"Because the only copies, ever, of the Sekhmet files are right here," Ellian raised three data disks. She moved in closer to Miss Parker and whispered in her ear. "Unfortunately, your mother's safety depends on them remaining a secret."

Parker raised her eyebrows.

"You'd also be surprised at whose genes were used in the project. Actually, if you factor in all the gene splicing used in Sekhmet, the subject has quite a few 'parents'."

"Tyler?! Focus," Parker interrupted.

"Several eggs were obtained from your mother and used in Sekmet." Ellian pulled out a picture and showed it to the three. "This is the first - and only - viable infant born in the project 40 years ago."



She set the photo on the desk, revealing a picture of an infant Vincent.

"Raines abandoned the project after the child disappeared and certain pressures came to bear on him. At any rate, other projects soon captured his interest. Until 15 years ago, that is."

She pulled out another picture and set it on the desk, revealing a 15-year-old version of the last picture.

"It seems Jarod isn't the only one he cloned."

—

My Son, Jarod - Spring 2001, Helper's Alley Bar & Grill, Manhattan, NY

—

She looked down at puppy brown eyes inhabiting a face possessed of a burden beyond his years. Could this photograph possibly capture the man her son had become? She looked again at the front door, wishing, hoping.

The sound of breaking glass and spilled food interrupted her train of thought and she turned to look behind her. She watched as the man in the photograph apologized profusely and helped the waitress to pile food and broken dishes onto a tray in slow motion.

The two stood up and Jarod looked over in her direction.

"Mom," he mouthed incredulously, and started towards her. She could barely move as he embraced her, hardly believing he was here.

\* \* \*

—

Xerox Copy - Spring 2001, Warehouse District, Manhattan, NY

—

The padded walls were in shreds again. Muffled thuds and the scraping of claws were faintly audible even through the soundproofing.

"He's digressing," the older man wheezed. "Whatever you've been doing lately to make him manageable, you'd better figure out why it's not working anymore."

Ellian sighed. That was the problem. It was a strain for Vincent to see the boy so constantly in a state he had struggled against himself. Their last meeting, in the special no surveillance room with nearby tunnel access, had been a disaster. Damien's anger and temper had been encouraged and provoked at every opportunity under Raines' care. Vincent's slow progress with him had suddenly self destructed with no explanation. All her efforts to get him to come back were rebuffed and she was beginning to think that it might not be a good idea for Vincent's mental state to come back.

"If you wanted him manageable, you should've started to think about that before now, Mr. Raines. Balls of anger rarely allow themselves to be managed."

"I wanted a being that would consume everything in it's path, a superior soldier."

"Congratulations, Mr. Parker. You got half of what you wanted. That's getting to be your track record, isn't it?" The young woman walked away, yelling at one of the guards to drug Damien before he hurt himself.

—

In the Depths of Despair - Spring, 2001, Drainage Pipe Below Central Park Concert Stage, Manhattan, NY

—

Vincent sat, listening desperately to the sounds of the concert music above. They were playing Bach tonight. He listened as the music ebbed and swelled, searching for the peace it had brought him in the past. He couldn't though. All he could see was Damien.

—

They'd grappled. Damien lunged, throwing all of his considerable weight at Vincent. Startled at the vehemence of the attack, Vincent fell backward. Damien crashed on top of him. Vincent barely got his arms up before Damien began to slash wildly at his head and upper torso.

"Is this how your precious Catherine felt, Vincent, the first time you coupled?" Damien ranted as he attacked. Vincent couldn't breathe. Damien seemed so much more heavy on his chest. "Did she throw up her arms? Did she scream for help? Did they have to pull you off her? Did they pump you full of drugs to calm you down and make you manageable?"

Vincent roared and cuffed Damien. They rolled on the floor in each others grasp, each trying to get the upper hand. A powerful backhand knocked Damien out and Vincent almost gave the killing stroke before coming out of the rage.

He ran. He left the boy laying on the floor and he ran. Through the tunnels, up through Central Park and down into the deepest chambers. After 12 years, he still couldn't remember the night Jacob Charles had been conceived. Despite all of Catherine's and Father's assurances, he still couldn't rid himself of the doubt that it had occurred exactly as Damien had said.

—

Vincent heard footsteps and closed his eyes, hoping whoever it was would pass him by.

He didn't.

"Ellian tells me something happened with Damien," Jarod observed as he as he slid down the wall next to Vincent.

"I do not need you to put my life right," Vincent snapped.

"I suppose only you can do that, Vincent."

"I still don't remember that night."

"What night?" Jarod asked.

"The night Jacob was conceived. I wasn't myself. She swears I didn't hurt her, but..." Vincent trailed off.

"Damien brought up something that brought that to the fore."

Vincent nodded. "I see in Damien...what I will be if I lose control. He's 4 years older than Jacob."

Jarod put his hand on Vincent's shoulder. "Jacob won't turn into Damien. You're a good father. I look at you with your kids. I wish my father would have been able to be there for me like that."

Vincent turned his head and tried to ferret out some deception. He couldn't.

"There might be a way to help you remember."

Vincent looked at Jarod suspiciously.

"I was a hypnotist once, no twice actually. Once in Los Vegas, once in Venice Beach. It's worth a shot," Jarod shrugged, almost casually.

"Regression therapy?" Vincent looked at Jarod, not daring to hope.

End  
file.